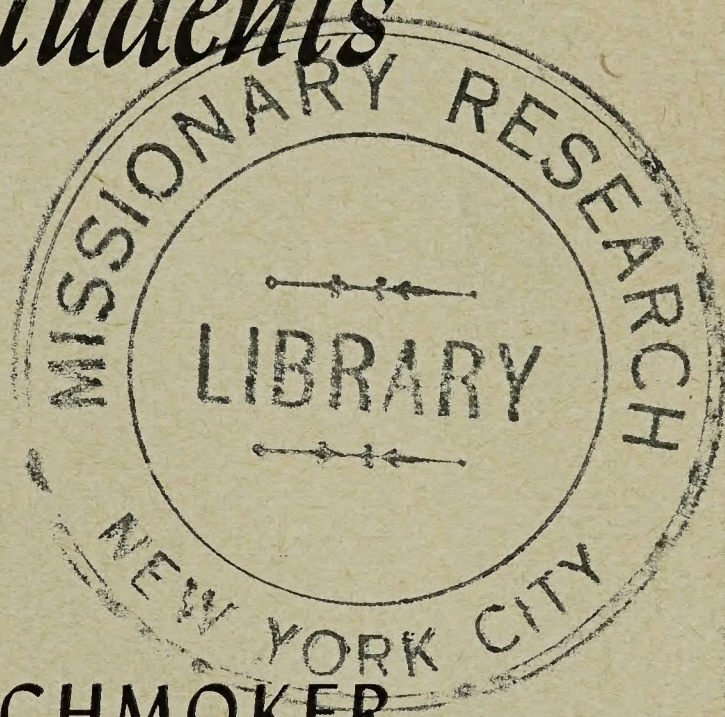


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Community Resources
for
Overseas Students



by
J. BENJAMIN SCHMOKER

THE COMMITTEE ON FRIENDLY RELATIONS
AMONG FOREIGN STUDENTS
291 BROADWAY
NEW YORK 7, N. Y.



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SERVICES OF THE COMMITTEE ON
FRIENDLY RELATIONS AMONG FOREIGN STUDENTS

1. RECEPTION SERVICES - The Committee is prepared to meet all students as they arrive in New York or San Francisco and to arrange for them to be met at other ports of entry. We arrange for housing, sightseeing, and travel.
2. HOME HOSPITALITY - The Committee has a well organized program of home hospitality for foreign students in the New York area, and helps to organize similar programs in other places.
3. JOBS - The program department gives help and advice to students who wish part time work, camp jobs, or speaking engagements.
4. CAMPUS PROGRAMS - Members of the staff visit college campuses at the request of college authorities and provide various program services, such as Program Papers.
5. COUNSELING - Students write from abroad for advice on colleges. Overseas students in the United States bring a wide variety of personal and professional problems to the C.F.R. The Committee depends on its representatives and associates in all parts of the country to help in finding a solution to problems.
6. INFORMATION SERVICES - The Committee conducts an annual census of foreign students published each year in "The Unofficial Ambassadors".
The Committee carries on a continuous opinion survey and undertakes informational studies of various phases of the foreign student enterprise on the request of interested groups or individuals when such studies aim to arouse interest in the program or result in help for students.

7. PUBLICATIONS

THE UNOFFICIAL AMBASSADORS

Published annually, with census of students
from abroad 25

LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES, A GUIDE FOR
NEW VISITORS

A small handbook for the newly arrived student .. 15
HINTS FOR HOSTESSES 05

PROGRAM PAPERS

International Campus 15
Summer jobs 05

CHARTS:

Foreign students in New York City, 1949; 1950
1935-50 10 each
Other charts (on request)



COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR OVERSEAS STUDENTS

The United States is the educational center of the world! From the far corners of the earth thousands of young people come to us each year to study in our schools and colleges. We have been given the unique opportunity of educating the future leaders of the world.

More and more we are learning the serious nature of this responsibility. We are learning, too, that technical know-how, money, and theoretical good will cannot build into international friendship. That must be done with patience and kindness, sincerity, and a deep appreciation of the worth of other peoples and cultures.

In 1950-51 there were over 30,000 foreign students in our colleges. Some of them were fortunate and learned to know the true heart of the American people. Many a student, however, has gone back to his own country vowing to get even for the way he was treated in the U.S.A.—where, if he had only known how to find them, there were many to hold out to him the right hand of friendship.

We have sent hundreds of missionaries to foreign lands. Now hundreds of the youth of these very lands are in our midst each year. How can we strengthen their faith and ours, meet the spirit and challenge they present?

How can we pay the debt we owe in those countries where our own American young people (students and soldiers) have been saved from bitter loneliness or from death? Clearly although all can have a part, this must be a community effort.

The students have come to us believing that they will find what they need for themselves and for their countries. Each one has a definite educational objective. In laboratories and lecture halls, libraries and classrooms, teachers and foreign student advisers will guide these persons toward that educational goal. While they are with us, inevitably they will form certain basic attitudes and convictions about American values, ways and habits. They will gain distinct impressions of Americans as persons. This, more than science and technology, will condition their future relationships with us. They will share their impressions with their countrymen. For every student here, hundreds will relive his experiences as he relates them. In this personal aspect of their education, those who teach them will be their fellow students, the tradesman, the public official, the businessman, — and you in your home and your community living. As an American citizen, you are playing a role in a planned program of international relations whether you realize it or not. The sensible thing for all, as individuals or groups, is to acknowledge it, work at it, making a planned and consistent effort to utilize

all opportunities, not to propagandize our culture, but to share our way of life.

This is an opportunity and a challenge for communities. It presents to them highly selected students from all over the world. It is an appeal to offer these students the highest and best in our culture. It offers you a share in the determined drive of free peoples to bring order and stability to a world threatened with chaos.

The very first principle is to recognize that the overseas student is here for a definite educational objective. It is for this that he is permitted to enter the country. It follows that the major responsibility for the student lies with the college where he is in residence. In most colleges this responsibility is entrusted to a faculty officer designated as the Foreign Student Adviser. The student is here for a relatively short period. The time factor requires that someone must assume responsibility in the selection of experiences that will further the educational objective. That person is the Foreign Student Adviser. All extra-class and extra-campus experiences should be planned with his knowledge and guidance. It is not that anyone would willingly exploit the time of a foreign student. It is simply that we should not risk misdirected efforts when every hour must count and all should be related to an inclusive objective.

A second factor that we must face squarely is that our willingness and generosity must be realistic enough to stand some jolts. This is not an effort undertaken for gaining publicity or personal satisfactions. It is an experiment in sharing. We are an unknown quantity to these young men and women from abroad. Many of them are quite likely to be somewhat uncertain as to our motives. The approach needs to be one of willingness to earn confidence and respect. If there is any suggestion that our overtures of friendship are motivated only by compulsion to do the right thing; if there is in the atmosphere of our endeavors the impression that we are discharging a duty, their overly sensitive natures and natural hesitancy will seek it out. This undertaking in friendship is no easy task. The best foundation for it is a genuine respect for the student as an individual, and an appreciation of the national culture he represents as part of the world picture; the acceptance of the fact that persons of different cultural, racial and religious backgrounds are sincerely seeking to know one another, appreciate and understand. It is a mutual quest.

A third essential is that we dare not limit our hospitality to a restricted group. In or near our communities are students from China, Burma, Japan, Germany, Yugoslavia, Iraq and other nations of the world. There are neighbors from Mexico and Canada. What is made available to one must

be made possible for all. To the college that has accepted all on the basis of individual worth, we must demonstrate an inherent respect for all personalities, including all in our hospitality and interest — without reference to nationality, race, color or religion.

Although these students are here primarily for technical training, it is recognized that the opportunity for study should provide much more than science and technology. There should be first hand experience with that which characterizes our way of life. There should be a supplementing of the educational plan by selective experiences within the American community. Let's look at it this way. Here is a young agricultural scientist from Egypt. He is a government sponsored student in residence at the University of Minnesota's College of Agriculture. He will get his scientific agriculture. If, however, this young man of science returns to Egypt without being at home with an American family, if he leaves us without meeting with a 4H Club, or spending weekends in the farm communities of Minnesota, if he goes home never having been a welcomed guest at a covered dish supper of a rural church, if he has never spent a Sunday afternoon pitching horseshoes with American farmers gathered at the farm of a neighbor, if he has had no opportunity to attend meetings of Farm Cooperatives and of the Grange, what a real tragedy that will be. Yet it has happened and it will continue to happen. There are students of education who never see a committee of the P.T.A. plan with the school in the interests of the child, or see adult education classes. There are students of engineering who never sit around the table of the professional society that considers some community improvement. There are students of social welfare that never meet with a training institute for community group leaders. There are students of government who are never invited to meet with the City Council. There are students of medicine who do not know about the management of clinics, hospitals and guidance centers which are sponsored and supported by civic groups. There are scores of students that fail to appreciate the cooperative efforts of Americans in putting over a Community Chest Drive. There are students from a Christian background that are greeted in the vestry every Sunday morning and know nothing of the youth teaching program of the Church.

The needs of our overseas students are these:

- (1) To realize their formal educational goal, which is the sole responsibility of the college.
- (2) To supplement that educational goal by planned and guided access to community resources related to their interests.
- (3) To enjoy the fellowship and friendship of the American people in ways that are natural, spontaneous, honest and sincere.

Where do Community Forces and Groups Fit into the Plan?

With the community experience an integral part of the educational plan of the student, the community in providing experiences must have a procedure that is educationally sound, adaptable to individual needs and capable of offering a progressive experience. The college and the community will work together. Since the Foreign Student Advisers cannot work with a multiple of groups, committees and individuals, the positive solution is to have one coordinating committee to represent all participating agencies and groups. No one group can, itself, satisfy the full needs of overseas students, and no one group can have access to all the resources required. Co-ordination begins with the acceptance of the principle that the job at hand is bigger than any one single group, or a combination of a few, can handle.

Any community group can take the initiative in forming a Co-ordinating Committee. A conference with the Foreign Student Adviser, Dean of Students and the college Director of Public Relations will decide the community groups that will have distinctive services and contributions. A meeting of representatives would then be called with college representation and, if the Foreign Student Adviser thinks it advisable, overseas student representation.

Such a Co-ordinating Committee will need some preparation. It is likely that the committee will have five immediate tasks:

- (1) To start on a program.
- (2) To acquaint themselves with data on the overseas students and to study the resources of the community that will be of educational value and significance.
- (3) To plan the ways whereby community resources can be made accessible to overseas students in a natural way that will combine friendliness with educational experiences.
- (4) To determine the unique contributions that certain social, religious, civic, cultural, and educational groups can make and the natural and spontaneous ways to offer these.
- (5) To recognize that overseas students have much to offer us and to provide ways that facilitate a natural sharing.

In any program of service for foreign students timing is important. When an overseas student arrives in the community his first and greatest need is for a sense of belonging. We may think of these first contacts as the "Threshold Orientation Program".

Threshold Orientation

(1) Where a college has limited dormitory facilities, housing for the first night or two may be a problem. Selected guest homes can be listed with the college, and arrangements made for the student to spend a short time in a home with a welcome and help for the initial difficulties.

(2) The college will have an orientation program. Included may be a separate weekend retreat or camp for foreign students. If there is such an Orientation Camp, an afternoon coffee hour given by the community groups will serve as an excellent introduction.

(3) Belonging is furthered by recognition. Enlist the cooperation of the community press. News stories, editorials, or a full sheet of welcome that lists names and countries of the students, not only proves a tangible welcome, but it alerts the community to the presence of guest students.

(4) Arrange with the university officers for a community reception for all overseas students. This should be early on the school calendar. Have a tour of the city in private cars ending at the place of reception. Let your small son and daughter go along. Let the reception include a welcome by the mayor and by those distinguished citizens whose professional interests are associated with the goals of the students. Have sectional maps of the world by regions requesting students to designate their home cities with a pin or star and write their names on the margins of the mounted maps. Display these maps later at the public library together with a special display for each of the countries represented.

(5) Where a community may have only a few students, the threshold orientation program is on a simpler basis. One might, for example, invite the overseas students for a weekend in a country home with selected American students, faculty and friends.

Home Hospitality

The sense of belonging will be further strengthened by a planned program of home hospitality. Where home hospitality is most effective, there is a training program for hosts and hostesses and there is a definite plan.

(1) At the initial contact, hosts may expect a degree of strangeness and artificiality. It is an experience one grows into and homes should be encouraged to seek the growth.

(2) Students are more at ease when the invitation is given to more than one. They may be two or more students from the same country, or students who have become acquainted in college. A student previously entertained in the home may be invited with a new guest.

- (3) Invitations should always be issued personally by the host family, and should express cordiality simply and sincerely.
- (4) It takes courage to find one's way to a strange neighborhood and ring the bell of a strange door. The strangeness will be lessened if the host will call for the guests at their college residence.
- (5) It is a good idea not to be completely prepared for your overseas guests. Have some last minute tasks that call for family assistance and invite the student to help. Similarly, if it is the habit of the family to do the dishes after dinner, don't change the pattern. Lifelong friendships between American and overseas students have frequently had their beginning before a kitchen sink.
- (6) Always share something personal around your family life. It may be father's hobby and work shop, brother's stamp collection, sister's girl scout badges, the collection of recordings, or even the motion pictures of the family's vacation at Glacier Park.
- (7) Have your mind made up that you are going to follow up with a repeat invitation. The second invitation may be to a picnic, a concert or a Sunday afternoon automobile drive. Make some follow-up even if the particular guest was not as congenial as you had hoped. If he proves congenial, you may wish to include him again and again in family circles with a growing knowledge of when he needs you and what family experiences would be most helpful. The real goal in home hospitality is for each student from abroad to find a real home away from home.

For the Community Coordinating Committee guiding the home hospitality program there are some special responsibilities:

- (1) Know the college calendar. There are times when all students have heavy academic responsibilities. There are also special campus events.
- (2) There is a tendency for invitations to come from homes on a certain economic level. Costs of entertainment do limit the possibilities. Overseas students, however, appreciate the hospitality of the very modest homes as much as they do the more spacious living of an elaborate home.
- (3) College vacation periods need special attention. An overseas student can get mighty lonesome on a deserted campus.
- (4) Encourage hosts to invite in other American friends whose professional careers are related to the educational interests of the students. This can lead to most significant contacts and experiences.
- (5) Special holiday and observance days in the countries of the students can be recognized by invitations given specifically to recognize the day. The Committee on Friendly Relations publishes a list of such special occasions.

(6) People always get in an especially hospitable mood at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Frequently there are more invitations than are needed. All overseas students should be in American homes on Thanksgiving and Christmas if they wish to be but they should have been a guest in that particular home *before* Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Urban Centers

Our cities may have more in the way of resources and certainly a wider representation of students, but there are many complexities when it comes to organizational plan.

(1) Few of us realize the number of educational and technical institutions in our cities. One city, for example, has overseas students in forty-three colleges, professional schools and technical institutes. The Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, upon request of an established local committee, will make a statistical analysis of foreign students in the larger cities indicating where they are studying, and the countries from which they come.

(2) Many cities have International Houses or Centers. A local committee should always have a sound working relationship with such centers. Social needs of foreign students, particularly on weekends, may require that such centers be provided if they do not exist. The International House Association, Dr. Herrick B. Young, Director, may be consulted for guidance. The headquarters are located at 500 Riverside Drive, New York 27, New York.

(3) The larger the city the more complex the organizational problem of a Coordinating Committee. Certain large cities have had considerable experience. The Greater New York Council for Foreign Students, supported by participating agencies and colleges, has demonstrated what cooperation can accomplish. In Cleveland, the Council on World Affairs offers competent professional guidance in co-ordinating the efforts of scores of groups and individuals. The Foundation for International Understanding through Students, Seattle, Washington, has an extensive and exceedingly well planned program.

The Urban Extension Program

Every city dweller looks forward to getting out of the city at times. Foreign students are no exception. Certainly if one is to understand American ways of life, rural living must be experienced. The cooperation of surrounding rural communities is necessary to a well-rounded program. Thus:

(1) A town or village may invite a group of twenty to forty overseas students for a weekend. The town planning committee, representing such groups

as the town council, and chamber of commerce, the schools, churches, women's clubs, etc., plans with the city Coordinating Committee which is responsible for selection and for personal data on the students. The town Committee is responsible for transportation, expenses, home hospitality and for those planned events that reveal American life in the rural community. The University Religious Council, in cooperation with the Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, has published and circulated throughout the state an illustrated pamphlet of a state-wide program that has attracted the interest and cooperation of many communities.

(2) Smaller groups of students may be invited by a single civic club, social or church group. Usually five to fifteen are invited. Upon arrival all students are together with hosts at a buffet supper. There are visits to the high schools and to such industrial plants and institutions of interest. With a smaller number of students invited, the communities visited and the experiences arranged can more easily be selected with the student's professional needs in mind. Social fellowship events should occupy a good proportion of the time available. An afternoon on an American farm will be a new experience for many. A 4H Club demonstration will be novel and revealing. Square dances, skating parties, hayrides, the shopping center on Saturday night, an ice cream social, anything that is enjoyable to us and different from the life of the city, will be enjoyed by the students from abroad.

(3) Conversely, the foreign student residing at the college located in the rural area needs certain city experiences. Liberal Arts students and students of education, science, agriculture, home economics and social welfare should visit technical high schools, clinics, schools for the handicapped, juvenile courts, community centers, housing projects, museums, factories and industrial plants.

(4) Holiday periods always bring students from abroad to our cities. Most of our large cities are well known. Just as Americans would not miss Paris, London and Berlin, overseas students race to see New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and San Francisco. The influx is at its peak during the Christmas holidays. A planned program of hospitality and educational, cultural and social events, and a reception center will make the visit meaningful. A notice to colleges in an area of two to three hundred miles will bring all the response that a local committee can properly handle.

The Community Resources

The effectiveness of any community sponsored program will be in direct relation to the ingenuity in supplementing the formal educational program and particularly the choice of experiences. The natural tendency is to invite

the students as guests to some planned event. A Boy Scout Jamboree, for example, is interesting to observe. There is more educational training, however, in the Scout Leaders' meeting and the troop training sessions preparatory to the Jamboree.

We need plenty of imagination in planning. The very things we accept as routine, the processes that to us are second nature, these are the revealing aspects of democratic living. Here may be some helpful suggestions:

- (1) Is there a community sponsored recreational program and a citizens group that directs the activities? Share the council meetings.
- (2) Is there a civic club that sponsors a program for the blind? Meet with the committee that carries the responsibility and observe the program in action.
- (3) Is there a Better Business Bureau, a Legal Aid Society, a Consumers Cooperative? A Family Counseling Service? Get a look at it.
- (4) Is there a Community Chest Drive? Attend the workers meetings, look at the plans, handle the literature and see, firsthand, how and why citizens give of their time and means.
- (5) Is there a YMCA, YWCA or church youth program? Have the students attend a leaders meeting where problems of youth are discussed and ways devised for meeting needs.
- (6) Is there a Woman's Club? Have a meeting where the civic, health and cultural projects of the group are reviewed and purposes stressed.
- (7) Is there a labor union? See its educational and social programs.
- (8) Is there a court in session?
- (9) At the church on the corner, look inside the parish house and observe its weekday program for all age levels, its day-nurseries, clinics, and camps.
- (11) Is there a political campaign on? Visit party headquarters, pick up the literature, attend some home meetings, see party candidates under fire.
- (12) Is there a manufacturing plant? Observe the safety precautions, the working conditions, training processes, personnel procedures and the role of management.
- (12) Are you proud of your school system? Attend a session of the School Board preferably one where citizens are appearing to be heard. See how the schools operate, the offices of the superintendent, supervisors, psychologist, extra-class activities, the P.T.A., night schools and adult education classes.
- (13) Does your city have a good health record? See how the public health is protected.
- (14) Is there a group of first rate citizens who call a mass meeting to pro-

test? It makes no difference what is protested. There are countries where this would be impossible.

(15) Are there summer camps and day camps? See the camps in action or, better yet, plan to have some overseas students as camp counsellors.

The Overseas Student Contribution

The exchange program is a two way process . . . and, for Americans, there is fully as much to receive as there is to give. For the student, a sense of belonging is strengthened if he can give as well as receive, and overseas students welcome opportunities to share their cultural heritage.

The American host must feel and show a respect for and interest in the backgrounds and ideas of his guests. A student should feel free to tell about the way things are done in his country, with the assurance that his listeners will consider them different from American ways but certainly not inferior. Whether the student is part of a family group at the dinner table, or on the platform speaking in a formal meeting, if he does not feel the security of respect and a sympathetic understanding he cannot be at his best. The student's comment about American life may not coincide with what you think, but remember that he has had many experiences which have led him to his conclusions.

It is not always easy to provide natural channels for the student to share what he has with others. Planning and imagination, again, can often provide new openings.

Some students find it easier to write than to speak. Local papers may invite articles interpreting cultural patterns and customs.

Many students are willing to accept speaking engagements. However, to prevent a few students from receiving too many invitations, while other equally qualified students do not receive a hearing, it is best to clear invitations through the Foreign Student Adviser. Overseas students are able to speak on the social habits and customs of their country; of music, drama, art, education and the country's plans for development. Political subjects usually should be avoided. If two or three students are to share in a panel discussion, then the area which is to be covered should be carefully designated in advance, and they should all speak on a common topic. To ask a student to cover the history and culture of his people in 10 minutes is both an impossibility and a discourtesy! An honorarium, even if modest, is an expression of courtesy, a friendly gesture. Of course travel expense should be paid. The most natural situations are afforded by informal conversational groups. A group of high school or college students can exchange views on everything from family life and vocational objectives to drama, literature, and religion.

Many students bring with them pictures, art objects, and other symbols of their own culture. An exhibit of these can be arranged through a library, or in some other public place, where many people will be able to see them. Some communities have arranged international exhibits, which have featured the handicraft of many different lands, and have given the guest student a fine opportunity to help plan and serve in the community in which he is living.

The students themselves when they feel free to offer suggestions can point out many ways in which they would enjoy sharing their culture and ideas with their American friends.

A Friend in Need

Many overseas students come to our universities entirely on their own resources. Others receive scholarship aid, but for all the dollar shortage is a matter of concern, often of actual hardship. These financial worries are the particular concern of the students themselves and the Foreign Student Adviser. Folks in the community, however, can offer to do all possible to assist the Adviser in meeting emergency needs. Immigration regulations may allow the student to accept some part time employment. A department store in the south employs a number of foreign students and advertises the fact. Business men of the community, ascertaining the skills and experience of the students, can gain service, and besides have the added satisfaction that they are participating in an educational plan. The Foreign Student Adviser will know the student's qualifications. The local committees can find the opportunities for employment.

At times certain groups of students are faced with emergency needs. Today students from China and Korea need special attention. They need financial help and even more they need sympathy and sound moral support. Whatever the nature of the need, the community can help. The important thing is for the local committee to have an understanding with the Foreign Student Adviser that they may be and expect to be called upon for emergency services.

Recently an overseas student commented: "I came to America to learn of your science. I expected America to have a material view of all life. I return knowing that the science of America has not obscured the spiritual values of her people."

What the world needs today is an awakening and a sharing of spiritual values. It is to these ends that we dedicate The 1951 Unofficial Ambassadors.

J. BENJAMIN SCHMOKER,
General Secretary



